

Chabot Space & Science Center and non-profit Cool the Earth join forces to engage Bay Area youth in Climate Change.

For Immediate Release: March 14, 2011 – San Francisco Bay Area: Oakland's Chabot Space & Science Center and Bay Area school-based Cool the Earth announce a joint partnership, to engage more youth and families in the important issue of climate change and effect positive results!

There has been much discussion recently in the media and academic circles around how to effectively engage the public in climate change. Recent studies out of Yale and George Mason University (Six Americas, Edward Maybeck, 2010) have shown that the reciting of scientific data with dire warnings of potential future ramifications has not worked.

But there is a new movement afoot, right here in the Bay area. Two non profits, Chabot Space & Science Center and school-based organization Cool the Earth are taking a different approach from warnings and scare tactics, and their messaging is aimed at our youth. By focusing on a child-driven model to create change and by using messages of positive opportunity through personal changes, these two organizations are staking out a new course.

Through a partnership with Bill Nye the Science Guy®, Chabot's Science lab is empowering youth to engage in the Climate change discussion, and urging them to seek and develop energy solutions that reduce the emission of green house gases in its new Bill Nye's Climate Lab and website.

Similarly, Cool the Earth has developed an innovative school based program in over 100 Bay Area schools, creating simple incentives for kids to take action. The grassroots program uses a child-driven model to inspire families to walk and carpool more, stop idling their cars and conserve energy at home—similar to how kids brought home the message of recycling and “don't smoke.”

“Bill Nye's Climate Lab gets kids excited about science, and shows them with hands-on learning how their everyday actions can make a big difference for our climate,” said Alexander Zwissler, Executive Director/CEO for Chabot Space & Science Center. “Similarly the Cool the Earth program motivates kids to start taking action to lower their footprint at home. We are hoping by partnering with Cool the Earth we can help develop good habits now among youth, their friends, and families.”

“Engaging kids in climate change has a double benefit,” explains Carleen Cullen, founder and executive director of Cool the Earth, a school-based organization which encourages kids to take every day actions with their families to lessen their carbon emissions. “We impart them with the value of life long knowledge about protecting their environment as well as inspire them to make an immediate impact in their lives.”

Visitors to Bill Nye's Climate Lab, which opened in November 2010, encounter the very tools and techniques used by climate scientists; as well as learning about innovative

technology and design in renewable energy, transportation, construction, and architecture. Participants board a hot-air balloon, imagine diving into the ocean in an underwater research vessel, and learn how scientists decipher our planet's climate history with samples of ancient ice, trees, and mud. The immersive, hands-on activities boost climate literacy and demonstrate energy-saving strategies for daily life.

The school-based program, Cool the Earth, currently in 100 Bay Area Schools, launches with a school-wide assembly featuring an age-appropriate play, empowering children to take action. Students then go home with a coupon book containing transportation and conservation actions; completed actions are returned to school and tallied on a banner, showing the community that collectively they can make a difference.

CTE has recently had its program evaluated by a senior research scientist at Stanford University to evaluate the impact and efficacy of its program and elevate the standards for evaluation in the climate change arena.

Alexander Zwissler (Chabot ED/CEO) and Carleen Cullen (CTE founder) are interested in sharing stories of success and broadening the dialog about positive messages of empowerment in the area of climate change mitigation.

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